



Aruba's multicultural heritage was celebrated in song and dance for Himno y Bandera

Sunday, March 18 was Himno y Bandera Day, the equivalent of "Independence Day" for Aruba; this year celebrating thirty-one years of their own National Anthem and flag. The preceding Saturday evening, the government sponsored celebration that attracted thousands of Arubans to the Plaza Betico Croes was conducted.

The gala evening consisted of entertainment in the band shell that highlighted not only Aruba's traditional culture but also the multicultural make up of its population. Various dance groups presented a display of the waltzes, polkas, tumbas and mazurkas that are native to the region, garbed in traditional island dress, usually in the blue, yellow red and white of Aruba's flag. Dance companies such as Simadanza and Super Dancers gracefully performed to music from some of Aruba's noted composers, such as Padu Lampe and Rufo Wever, the composers of "Aruba Dushi Terra," the island's National Anthem.

Alydia Wever and the group from Diane Antonette's Skol de Baile showed that modern dance is also popular in Aruba, with a special number performed by residents of the island from all parts of the world, in a tribute to the island's multicultural nature.

Young Cheryl Maduro, one of the winners of this year's patriotic singing competitions entertained various government dignitaries that filled the front rows of the audience, including Prime Minister Nelson Oduer and Governor Fredis Refunol, along with the Minister of Culture, Ramon Lee. Featured performers were the Henriquez sisters, Angeline and Joyceline, winners of the competitions with their song, "Ruman," and accompanied in dance by John Freddy Montoya.

When not watching the show that lasted through most of the night, islanders and tourists were able to enjoy authentic island cuisine, from a light snack to a full dinner and dessert. Various crafts were for sale, most bearing the design of the Aruban flag, and the majority of those attending took the opportunity to show their patriotism in their fashion of dress.

As usual, the Himno y Bandera Cultural celebration was a huge success, an exciting evening of entertainment and family fun!